"Truth Is One, Men Call It By Various Names." —RIG VEDA

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DIVINE PEACE

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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—*Ezekiel*
"Light shall come again from the East."
—*Tyndall*

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THE SECRET PLACE

by George Macdonald

Who dwelleth in that secret place,
Where tumult enters not,
Is never cold with terror base,
Never with anger hot:
For if an evil host should dare
His very heart invest,
God is his deeper heart, and there
He enters in to rest.

When mighty sea-winds madly blow,
And tear the scattered waves,
Peaceful as summer woods, below
Lie darkling ocean caves:
The wind of words may toss my heart,
But what is that to me!
'Tis but a surface storm—Thou art
My deep, still, resting sea.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Enshrined in Mary's Veil a Child is singing. Peace o'erfloods the earth.

A Child is widening the rivers, turning the slow-moving streams up the White Mount to the Throne of the Golden Mist. Love shines afar in waves of spreading glory, extending beyond the unseen stars, freeing the Halo of Content. —*Selected*

So long as the bee is outside the petals of the lily, and has not tasted the sweetness of its honey, it hovers round the flower emitting its buzzing sound; but when it is inside the flower, it noiselessly drinks its nectar. So long as a man quarrels and disputes about doctrines and dogmas, he has not tasted the nectar of true faith; when he has tasted it, he becomes quiet and full of peace.

—*Sri Ramakrishna*

First, keep thyself in peace, and then shalt thou be able to pacify others.

A peaceable man doth more good than he that is well learned.

A passionate man turneth even good into evil, and easily believeth the worst.

A good peaceable man turneth all things to good.

—*Imitation of Christ*

Peace dwells in the man who loves God. Realize that your life is barren without Him. Yearn for Him, and peace will follow. When a man finds no peace in the world, dispassion grows within him and he is drawn to God. The more a man finds that the world is barren, the more intense becomes his devotion to God and the greater is his peace. The greater the thirst, the sweeter is the water. Create thirst and you will have peace in God.

—*Swami Brahmananda*

DIVINE PEACE

by Swami Paramananda

Throughout the whole of Indo-Aryan thought and culture we find that great emphasis is laid upon the idea of peace. Those who attend our Services will observe that we begin and end them with the benediction of peace, with a prayer for peace, not just for ourselves but for all living beings. This is according to a very ancient tradition of India, and it has a meaning deeper than we may at first imagine. Every man wants peace for himself, but often he fails to realize that as long as there is any unrest in the great universe, the individual cannot escape from that unrest, even if he should hide in a mountain cave or in the dense forest, because he is a part of the great universe. That is why his prayer for peace should include the peace of others, for only as he seeks to share it with others, will he be able to find it and enjoy it in its fulness.

The idea of peace is difficult to define. It is ethereal. It is a feeling, a quality of the mind, and not merely something we find through a combination of material circumstances. A man may think that if he should acquire health or fortune or fame, he will enjoy perfect contentment. But it is not so. We often imagine that by avoiding one condition and going into another we shall find peace and eliminate all our troubles. Experience, however, soon shows us that it is not through the shifting of conditions or by running away from difficulties that we can ever attain even ordinary peace, and most certainly not that divine state of spiritual consciousness—the great Peace of *Nirvana* — in which all miseries and struggles cease.

Peace, as I have said, is a quality of the mind. When an individual, through his own ripeness of wisdom, surrenders himself to the infinite Will, and instead of asserting his ego seems to go with the Divine tide rather than trying to go against it, he realizes peace — the peace that only comes with surrender. But this surrender is not of defeat. When we take a morbid attitude and say, "I am no good; I am a failure; there is no use in my trying to do anything," that is weakness, that is death. That is not the true surrender which comes when we realize the infinitude of God, that He is all, and that we are merely His instruments. Jesus had this realization when, after His hours of prayer, He came out with words of surrender for Himself, for the world and for eternity: "Not My will, not My will, but Thine be done!"

The individual who in this can succeed in imitating the spirit as well as the words of Christ will find within his soul a divine tranquility. Though he may be tormented, though he may be robbed of everything that he holds dear, nothing can rob him of that exalted consciousness. Whatever happens nothing can take from him that unalterable serenity of heart and that which goes with it—divine wisdom and power. Unrest, unhappiness, turbulence, all these will still exist in the world about him, but wherever he enters he brings heavenly illumination.

In order to bring this we must have it. We must have the true Divine Peace, and that is not a matter of imagination or calculation; it is a matter of finding our home in Truth, finding a resting place where there is no more struggle, no more scheming and planning, but only a great surrender to the Supreme. It is indeed a divine state, and we do not acquire it at once. It is not ours from the outset, but those who follow the right means, they find it.

Buddha's renunciation of all his worldly fortune was to this end. He saw the world of suffering, unrest, unhappiness. It called to him and he answered that call. We also see suffering, unrest and unhappiness, but too often we close our eyes and try to forget what we have seen. When some tragic incident such as death or loss comes immediately before us, we try to cover it with flowers. But Lord Buddha did not do that. He sought to go to the very root of suffering. First of all he sought outwardly with all the means that the world could offer, but this external search brought him nothing because peace is not found in any *place*. One cannot establish a corner and call it a corner of peace. Human beings full of unrest will come there, and while there is unrest in any soul there is no place where one can maintain perfect peacefulness. It can, however, be established in the individual heart, and when a man has realized it there, then he carries it with him everyhere. Undaunted by the storms of life, undepressed by any condition, he maintains in all circumstances his deep inner calm and thereby he takes his place among the men whom we call saints and sages—the illumined souls—whose happiness is not dependent on the outside world, whose conduct is not determined by the opinions of others.

The average person goes up or down according to what is said to him. A word of praise makes him feel elated, while a word of blame causes him to be unhappy and downcast. Not so with those who are truly self-surrendered. Self-surrender comes as the result of man's divine vision. It is through suffering bravely endured, through constant dedicated service, that we learn to do the Will of God in all things. When we can offer our praise to the Lord, not merely when we are successful

and happy but at those times when we are unsuccessful and unhappy; when in our darkest hour we can say, "Thy Will be done! I know that there is a Divine plan in this misfortune, something for me to learn, something to be accomplished," at once the burden will fall off from us.

It is not by going against the conditions of life that we ever overcome them. Affirmation may bring a certain amount of help, but it is only temporary, and the human heart, my friends, is not satisfied with momentary good fortune. It wants the permanent; it wants the lasting; it wants the Divine; and nothing short of unity with the Divine will ever satisfy the soul of man, because it is there in that unity alone that we find our home and our fulfilment.

If even for a moment we are able to lay our weariness, all our struggle -- everything — at the feet of God, we shall be revivified, remade. This is what the devotees do—the aspiring souls, the meditative souls. They take refuge in the Eternal One, and at once the weight of life drops away from them. One moment of such contact does more for them than many hours of sleep. They can go without sleep, but they cannot live without this communion with Great Truth, with God.

No one, however, is limited in his way of approach to God. No one should be forced to accept any single conception of Godhead. Godhead is infinite. You may find contact in one way and someone else may find it in another; the way does not matter. What does matter is that we all acquire a vivid consciousness of the spirit within us and learn to find our peace there. Often we hear people say, "I have struggled for peace, yet have not found it." But where peace is, there is no struggle. This does not mean that we should not struggle for peace or

for any great Ideal; it means that so long as we are merely struggling we have not reached our goal.

Sri Ramakrishna illustrates this by means of a simple parable. One day a kite, flying high in the air, saw a dead fish. At once he flew down and picked it up in his beak. Then in his greed he tried to find a place of seclusion where he could enjoy it alone. But other kites also had seen; they wanted the fish too; so they pursued him, tormented him and gave him no rest, till finally from exhaustion he dropped the fish, and at once all his troubles ceased.

Through greed, selfishness and ignorance we are caught in the meshes of our desires, and we wonder what is the cause of our unhappy state. Like the kite we fight to free ourselves without success, but when we let go of our egotistic feelings and longings, it is as if we had rid ourselves of a terrible burden. At once we experience supreme happiness and peace.

A man who tries to row a boat while it is still bound by its anchor cannot make any headway. He will merely exhaust himself. So with us. We do not lift our anchor and then we wonder why it is that our life is at a standstill. The reason is that we have bound it by our egotistic sense, our selfishness, our self-consciousness and self-will. It cannot move forward. Moreover it is these dark and negative qualities which prevent the Divine Light from shining through us and which are the cause of all our conflicts.

Now of all conflicts the most needless and cruel are those about religion. People stir up such unnecessary trouble, such bitterness and unrest when they try to force their views upon the minds of others, declaring that they are right and the other people are wrong. A person who

has found genuine religion, who has learned what God means and Christ, and divinity, becomes full of peace and brings peace to the world. It is not the aggressive man going about preaching his gospel who brings either peace or illumination to mankind, but rather it is he who has found it within himself. Though he may be a man without a word, his light will shine and his life reveal Truth.

Sri Ramakrishna gives the example of the bees. Before they have found the heart of the flower they make a tremendous buzzing, but as soon as they find the object of their search they become silent. They are too busy tasting the nectar to make any more noise. So it is with human souls. The discussions, arguments and disputes, the quarrels and fights and fanatic tendencies belong to the lower stages of our spiritual research. When in our life we touch the heart of religion, whether it be through Christianity, Buddhism or any other ism, we find peace and are able to convey peace to those who are open to receive it.

Have you not sometimes met a person who does not even speak your language but in whose presence you feel something majestic and serene? It is not through words that the great mystics convey to those about them their sense of infinite peace. Peace is to be felt. The *Upanishads* define the state of consciousness known as *Nirvana* or *Samadhi* as "beyond mind and speech." What words could express it? It can be expressed only through one's own being.

Peace, poise, serenity — these cannot be attained through calculation. We may resolve that no matter what happens we shall maintain our balance, but balance is not acquired that way. Unless it is inherent, unless we feel forth that quality.

that everything is happening through the Will of God, we shall not be able to silence our aggressive, turbulent spirit. Voluntarily or involuntarily it will rise and torment us as well as others who may be with us or around us. The only way to remedy this is to fill our hearts with something that satisfies us forever. But where in this changing world shall we find such satisfaction? We may go from one country to another, from one experience to another, we may accumulate knowledge of many things without attaining the one knowledge, the one experience that will redeem us from misery and unrest. Nor will the outer forms of religion give it to us. It is not the book, the creed, the dogma that will bestow upon us the precious peace. The wealth of the world will not buy it, for it is a condition of consciousness, a mental quality to which all men can have access.

Every human being is endowed with this divine possibility, but the way to it is inward, and therein lies the secret of its attainment. We seek outwardly for that which lies within. The moment we change the direction of our search, the moment we begin to look within our own souls, we become less aggressive, we cease to judge, to criticize; we talk less and think more. Our thought grows ever deeper and deeper until finally it blends with the profound Reality of God. When that great ultimate Truth is found, will it then be difficult to surrender to It? When once we have access to Infinite Power, the One Power, will it be a sacrifice then to surrender — to give up the limited in order that the unlimited may flow through us? When our little mind, full of ignorance, full of weakness, subject to error, feels itself drawn up into the Divine Mind which is all wisdom without any shadow of error, will it then be a sacrifice to surrender our little-

ness to Its greatness, to silence the clamor of selfish thought and open ourselves to receive our real heritage?

At first the way to peace is difficult. We have followed the dictates of our physical senses so long that obedience to them has become a habit. Our appetites crowd in upon us and seek to possess us. Therefore resolution is needed, and practice. We must set aside certain hours for reflection, for communion with our Ideal, according to our inner conviction. In this we cannot follow somebody else's path however easy it may seem to them. We must follow the path of our own deeper feelings, our own aspirations. Properly directed these will lead to our home in Truth. Only then will the great Peace be known.

As I have told you, it is not during the time of struggle that we find peace. Struggling to meditate, to pray, to be unselfish, to become pure, we are driven on and on. But struggle is one thing, becoming, another. Peace is the product of being and becoming. We do not find it while we are trying to be religious. It is when we have *become* religious that we find peace. Then all that we have read of saints, serene under all circumstances, in heat and cold, pleasure and pain, manifests as a reality in our own souls. These changing conditions we find no longer touch us, a harsh word spoken to us does not alter us, words of praise do not affect us; for we know that we belong in all things not to ourselves but to the Deity who works through us. It is a wonderful point of view.

Even a few persons who are ripe with such spiritual understanding can lift an entire community. It is not, however, by forming leagues and societies and organizations that we are able to realize this divine principle. They may help us to approach that end, but it is to be found at last only within ourselves. It forms the theme of

all religions, but this does not mean that the followers of religion have always kept this goal in view. If they had done so the expression of spiritual life in the world would be different from that which we see. Now we give importance to minor things. We say, "My religion is better than yours, therefore I shall force it upon you." If it is better, then let it manifest through your superior love, through your dignity, through every thought and action. That is the only way to spread any gospel.

Those who live the life, who have found greatness and dignity within themselves, they alone are the true representatives of Divinity, whether they come from the East or the West, the North or the South. There cannot be any separation between these souls and God Himself because they have become partakers of Divinity. They have surrendered to Truth, not through imagination, not by pretending, but by actual feeling, by realization. "Thou art all in all, O Lord. Put me wherever it pleaseth Thee — in a palace or in a prison, I shall take everything as from Thy hand. I shall sing only of Thy glory!" Hindu sage, Greek philosopher, Christian mystic, all sing the same song. Their one supreme desire is to lay everything before God and be His true servants, His messengers, offering hands, feet, mind, heart in all things, big and little, for His service.

Herein we find a great lesson for life and living. It teaches us that whatever we do, no matter how humble the task may be, there God is present, and His Will is manifesting just as surely as in the big, important tasks. The mystic tells us that not a blade of grass moves anywhere without His Will. Why then should we become so aggressive and questioning when something goes wrong or presses us too hard? Do we not see that as soon

as our vision unfolds and we realize the magnitude of the Divine Will and its working out in all things, that our heart becomes peaceful and we can truly meditate?

As long as we have aught against any man or any creature, we can have no access to God even though we may belong to the world's greatest religion. It is through the mind and heart that we realize the allness of God and feel goodwill toward all creatures, and this attitude we can cultivate. Christ taught that a disciple should lay his gift before the altar only after he has made peace with his brother. When the heart is not serene and peaceful and the mind is turbulent, our prayer does not ascend, our actions are unfruitful and our vision is distorted.

Vedic philosophers remind their followers again and again to have naught against any living being, not even to utter a single word against anyone. When the mind is full of peace then it finds illumination. That is the basis, the foundation of the spiritual life. If our foundation is right, what can go wrong? If our foundation is wrong we may go from place to place, we may go to all the churches and offer our worship, but that worship will not reach the throne of God. Everything depends upon the quality of the mind. Let the mind be freed from all hatred, jealousy, unworthy feelings. Every day, every hour of your life, in your business dealings, when you are walking, when you are talking, in all association with your fellow beings cultivate this habit of harmonious thinking, and you will find no place distasteful to you. Wherever you go you will by your thoughts create your own environment, and that self-created environment will be much more potent than anything which you have to deal with in the world outside.

One who comes with the dazzling light of spirituality

destroys all darkness. We call Him a Saviour. You, however, have the same divine grace within yourself. There is nothing impossible for the Knower of Truth. There is nothing impossible for one who has absolute trust in the Eternal One and who has surrendered his will to the Divine Will. Such a one has found peace and can bring peace to all living beings, not just by the empty word. There are many who see the suffering of humanity and try to remove it by money, by material aid and by spoken comfort, but they do not remove the real suffering, they do not hear the real cry of the human heart. Man's desires, like so many enemies, bind him as with fetters and drag him down. But when through surrender, through trust in the Divine wisdom, he lets them go, at once his sufferings come to an end and he is filled with peace and bliss.

What greater gift than this realization of infinitude could we bring to man? To show the way is the greatest service we can render him. We may not always do it by active preaching. It is not necessary for everyone to be a preacher. The heart that feels the pang of humanity by its compassion, its love, will do greater work than any preaching can do in removing the darkness and ignorance of the troubled world.

Let us, therefore, try to fill our hearts with these potent spiritual factors, then we can go forth as the great mystics say, armored with light, protected by love and enfolded by peace — not the peace of a moment, but the everlasting peace shining out through a surrendered heart, from the heart of the Great Mystery which some men call Truth and others call God.

Peace immediately follows surrender. —*Bhagavad Gita*

FRIENDSHIP WITH LIFE

by Sister Devamata

In all our dealings with the world there seem to be two distinct methods of procedure. One is to regard the obstacles and obstructions in our path as enemies and, when they are conditions caused by man, to fight them and if possible, to conquer them. The other is to regard them as friends and ally ourselves with them.

We often interpret non-resistance as passive endurance. But it is more than that. It is an active alliance through which we annex ourselves to the whole cosmic universe. The man moving toward God does not wish to eliminate any part of God. He wishes to know God in every particular manifestation, in every experience.

If we read the lives of the great saints of India we shall find them calling the most hostile influences friends. Once Swami Vivekananda went to have a visit with the great saint Pavhari Baba, but before he was allowed to see him he was kept waiting all day. When he was finally admitted the saint apologized for the delay, but explained that he had been entertaining a friend of the Divine Mother, and had been listening to Her message. Later the Swami learned that the "friend" Pavhari Baba had been closeted with for so many hours was an attack of fever, and the message was the lesson he had been learning by it.

You may say it is a very dangerous doctrine which teaches one to regard fever as a friend. But is it not a friend? If you have a fever does it not mean that there is impurity within you which the fever is burning up, and that there is a lesson to learn which perhaps only the fever could teach you? Therefore, instead of toss-

ing in discomfort, full of self-pity and rebellion, would it not be better to go within yourself and try to discover what that lesson is? Would not body and mind both benefit if you were to lie there patiently listening for the Voice of God in your soul to reveal the meaning to you? It is the battle, the struggle within us that creates fevers. Peace and calmness and alliance with the forces of nature will quickly put an end to them all. Actually force is force, no matter how it manifests. Of itself it is neither good nor bad. Thus if we ally ourselves with it and through God's grace direct it properly, we shall be that much more powerful.

A wise man does not sit down and weep over every unfortunate experience that comes to him. He turns and faces it and listens to it and asks what new gift of wisdom it is bringing him. He feels that it has come to him as a friend, to tide him over some point of weakness, to save him from some wrong or negative state, and so he sits down beside these experiences, as it were, as one would sit by the side of a wise friend and listen to his words of wisdom. One who approaches life in this spirit is no longer afraid of what it may bring. He no longer flies from it or tries to hide from it. Instead he welcomes it and takes gratefully whatever it chooses to bestow. Even a sea of blackness turns into a sea of light when we look upon it in this way.

For the most part, however, we resist nearly all the forces of nature. If it is cold, we shrink away from the cold. If it is excessively hot, we shrink away from the heat. If there is too much sunshine, or if the road is rough, or whatever the discomfort may be, we shrink away from it and thereby we give it power over us. If, however, we go towards it, we shall find that there is no

manifestation in nature that has not its pleasure and beauty. If you relax you will feel the exhilaration of the cold. You will feel even the joy of heat in the very sense of suppleness it gives to the body. You will enjoy the storm if you unite with it as a friend. Every aspect of nature has something to share with us, and gives us something when we hold out our hands in welcome. When we fail to do so we are the losers by just so much. This is the way to draw near to God. We imagine that to draw near Him means drawing away from everything else, shutting ourselves off on every side. But he who has once realized union with God knows that God will speak to him in the most unexpected places, through the most unusual channels. God is not in any one special locality, from which everything else is fenced off and excluded. He is everywhere, in everything. Not only is He in everything, But He is seeking to make Himself felt everywhere. He is ever longing to have us recognize Him. When we hear that voice in our heart and do not answer it, the worldly joys give us very little pleasure. But if we respond to the divine call, then even the smallest outward happiness fills us with joy because we find God in it.

Why should we regard anything in the world as an enemy? We do not regard our hands or our feet as enemies. We are all parts of this great cosmic Being. It is not something different from us, nor are we anything different from It. Our life and Its life are one; our interests and Its interests are one. The Law that governs us and the Law that It embodies are identical. Only as we move toward the realization of this oneness are we moving toward the light. When the eye is single the body is full of light and the eye is not single until it sees oneness or God everywhere.

To see an enemy in anything is to see something that cannot be united with God and ourselves. Let us, therefore, from this very day set out with one idea — to ally ourselves with the universe and to ally the universe with ourselves.

Humanity's great dream in these modern times is that nations may settle their differences through agreements and alliances rather than through armed conflict. They seek some way by which they can lose the idea of enemies and gain the idea of friends. But how can we unite nations when we cannot unite ourselves, even with a few people? How can we hope to overcome the stormy powers of the universe when we are at odds with the powers of our own special environment? How can we expect to go out and help men rise above their griefs if in the silence of our own chamber we are overcome by our own sorrows? It is not possible. The work of each one of us is first and foremost the integration of his own life and being with the life and being of the whole. If each one takes care of that then the great world about us will take care of itself.

It is a very good practice to cultivate in our hearts the spirit of friendliness, not to feel that if someone pushes us aside or takes our place, or stands in our way, that he is an enemy; but rather let us begin to feel that he is a friend. Also let us cultivate the same sense of friendliness towards every animal we see and begin to observe its noble traits and its points of contact with human life and feeling. The little plant, too, we should look upon as a little sister — a small being who has not yet learned to walk. Let us feel a relationship with the sun and the rain, and think of the pleasant things connected with them. What a wonderful habit to form — to speak al-

ways of the pleasant things rather than the unpleasant. That is the way to become happy-hearted. The value of life with all its experiences cannot be over-estimated. No one who has this attitude of mind can ever be shut away from God's message. At every moment it is pouring into his heart, filling it with new life, new light, new joy. If it is not pouring in upon us, it is because we lack the spirit of friendship towards God and His universe.

Let us try from this time on to cultivate it, to accept joyfully whatever comes as a loving messenger. Let us feel that God-unity with all living things, then we cannot fail to see the God Presence in our spiritual practice. We shall find that as we go about our spiritual tasks we shall be saying to ourselves all the time, "How beautiful is life! How great is God! How wonderful that I can be consciously one with Him and with His universe!"

Let us try now to be aware of that sense of oneness, so that nowhere shall we feel that we have an enemy, nowhere shall we have a sorrow, nowhere can there be for us loneliness or grief or disappointment. Even were there a disappointment, God would be there too, and where God is there can be no pain. Just where we think there is loneliness, there also is God, and who can be lonely in the divine Presence? Just where we think we have lost something, there at the heart of that loss is God, and how can there be any loss with God in the very midst?

To enjoy God through everything.
To thank God for everything.
To leave God with everything.
Who is there, other than He?

—*Malcolm Schloss*

REPRESSION OR MASTERY?

by Srimati Gayatri Devi

An objective survey of the conditions that surround us today clearly reveals that the world itself is in a state of flux. Through correct observation and study comes the recognition that mankind is going through evolutionary and revolutionary changes. Old orders are crumbling and new ones are arising. Man is possessed with that drive which moves him forward. This he calls progress although the term does not necessarily imply improvement. At most it represents his expression in all spheres of existence — physical, psychological and spiritual.

Because we are living in a period of human history when upheaval, turmoil and disruptions are predominant in the world at large, it is of utmost importance that as individuals we become decisive about the course we should follow, so that our ethical and spiritual values may not be undermined and swept away by the forceful world currents. Let us realize that we can be straws on their path or expert swimmers who can ride over them and come ashore safely.

After all, man himself is the most important being on this planet; his preservation or destruction is largely determined by his sense of values, his hopes, dreams and ideals. He does have to make adjustment to the world in which he lives and at the same time endeavor to mold his world according to these values. As an individual, man is driven toward a goal although he is not always aware of it. Personal happiness, well being, material progress seemingly are his objectives, but really it is something more, something intangible which creates within him an unrest even when his immediate material aims are fulfilled.

Strangely, man himself does not altogether understand his own drives. Otherwise there would be provisions in the field of education for acquainting man with himself, with the deeper, hidden parts of his being. Does today's educational system serve its true purpose of unfolding man on all levels of his personality? By education and other available opportunities at his disposal is he coming to better health of mind, to fuller growth or more complete integration of personality?

Let us at this point consider the training of children at home and at school today. There are parents who do not believe in discipline which they consider a repressive measure. They allow their children unlimited freedom. The little ones are neither curbed nor restricted in their behavior. This, in the opinion of parents and educators, is the progressive method; the kind in which discipline has no place whatsoever.

The result of this experiment shows that it is not altogether satisfactory. Children need freedom for expression, no doubt, but restraint too is as essential as freedom. Once a little boy held a hammer in his hand and said to the man near him, "May I hit you on the head?" The man answered, "No." To which the child queried, "Why not?" Only a stupid parent would have allowed the boy to do as he pleased on the excuse that he should not be repressed. If all the basic urges, temperamental and natural, were given unrestricted outlet, a large number of our own children would prove to be delinquent and homes and schools would become asylums!

It is urgent that a child have individual attention for the molding of his character. So often this care is wanting. Sometimes parents nurtured under rigid discipline themselves impose similar discipline on their offspring.

Again some follow the opposite method; they indulge their children. Can we say that either of these ways is the right one?

Parents and teachers have tried various techniques and have come to their own conclusions. The wise ones cannot fail to recognize the value of both repression, which is no more than intelligent control, and expression, without which no human being can develop a normal, healthy and happy personality. We need more than theoretical knowledge about child guidance. We must have maturity and understanding. Otherwise we are poor influences whether we are mothers or fathers, teachers or educators. If our children and the generation that will follow them do not become well integrated persons, we must share the blame for it. By our own lack of maturity and integration, by our want of wisdom or example we are failing toward them.

Now let us consider the adults who in their mature years show in their character the results of the freedom or restriction that has influenced them in childhood. Vedanta in its psychological philosophy presents man as a personality which constitutes a complex being. According to its explanatory teachings, man's tendencies and traits, impressions and desires, his instincts and drives, all are already in him when he comes into the world. Throughout life, from infancy to old age, he expresses and unfolds the primary substance of his nature. This substance is molded, altered and developed in conjunction with life's ingredients such as environment, education, opportunities and influences. Neither in childhood nor adulthood can we discount the material of our basic personality. This is something we need to understand about ourselves. We can blame heredity or en-

virons for our personality traits, but the truth is that not these, but we ourselves, are entirely responsible for the virtue or vice, weakness or strength of our inherent nature.

As an adult, we can learn to understand ourselves and study the habit pattern in our unfolding personality. The multiple traits of our inner nature, such as rigidity and fear, repression and inhibition, anger and hate, love and sympathy, selfishness and self-centeredness all are but so many aspects which represent us variously. Meanwhile, behind this seeming self, our multifarious personality, stands the other Self, which Vedanta calls the *Atman,* the Divine or higher Self of man — his soul. At present our awareness of this Self is almost nil. Vedanta teaches that recognition of the Spirit within us is the beginning of religion or rather the quickening of our spiritual life. When the desire to manifest this inherent divinity grows strong in us, out of our own volition and choice we seek to repress the natural but lower propensities. The urge or the incentive to do so arises not out of a sense of guilt or externally imposed idea of morality, but purely through the aspiration to express the best, which we know is within us. It is then that self-discipline takes the place of frustrating repression, and expression becomes the manifestation of a mastered self.

As long as we are content with ourselves as we are today — imperfect, vain, egotistic, selfish, disagreeable at one time, serene and pleasant at another, loving and kind now, resentful and bitter later — we cannot be concerned with any change that might be wrought in our personality. But if we believe in the inherent divinity behind our apparent self (which Emerson calls, "the eating, drinking, sleeping man"), if we believe in our

better Self and in our power to be that Self, then we begin to make efforts in order to improve. This improvement is possible through the exercise of control over that force of nature in us which expresses itself through our lesser being. Control is not the same as repression. It is the restraint of a force seeking an outlet. By not allowing it to spend its fury we do not necessarily store it up for future explosion. We merely harness and transmute it into the power of our Divine Self. This is the mark of the superior man, the self-cultured, the truly civilized. Anger and hate, greed and pride, jealousy and meanness are to be subdued and dissolved. If we can deal with them through mastery before they are released to emit their poison, the advantage is ours. It is like curing a malady without an operation, removing the infection with medication and not through surgery.

In the above illustration man himself is his own physician. He must apply the technique of mastery, keeping faith in its efficacy and the final results. Let us take heart in the knowledge that many unruly, undisciplined persons have proved their worth and power and in time become masters of self. This victory, however, is seldom miraculous or sudden, nor is it without a price. It comes as the crowning accomplishment to man, who strives, struggles, persists resolutely and does not relent in his efforts until his aim is accomplished.

In childhood training when our personality is being formed we receive considerable guidance. When we have become adults and the habits of our character are already formed and set, the task of changing ourselves becomes a difficult one. Self-mastery is the venture of a mature person and maturity and adulthood are not always simultaneous. So often we find that a person has the

desire for self-improvement but lacks the power to carry it out. His old habits of thought, conduct and action hold him as if in a vise. Here he needs to cultivate and increase his capacity for exertion as well as faith in that for which he strives. Above all he *must* have faith in himself, faith in his inherent potentiality and divinity, and faith in his capacity to accomplish his end by conscious and unrelenting exercise of his powers. An adult, too, must have guidance, inspiration and direction, but the result he desires is wholly determined by him, by the combined activity of his own faith, will, reason and exertion.

Our religious tendency, too, helps considerably, for through religious faith we become recipients of Divine grace which minimizes our struggle. The man who can say, "I cannot do aught without God's assistance. He will help me, then I cannot fail," that man has already won a partial victory.

The members of Alcoholics Anonymous are an example of the change that can be brought about in those who have become hopeless victims of alcoholism. They speak of it as a disease, a malady, a neurosis. They trust in the Power they consider "greater than themselves" and through the help of that Power and their effortful cooperation with It, they succeed in great measure in healing and transforming the afflicted ones who are none other than themselves.

When we change inwardly, our conduct, behavior and expression carry the effect of that change. We lose the inclination to be our former selves. The angry man then suffers for having been angry and his desire to overcome anger equips him with the ability to do so. The process is not repression, however. First it is self-con-

trol. Then the susceptibility to that particular emotion vanishes. A time comes in the maturity of our nature when no person or condition can arouse anger in us any longer. Sri Krishna points out in the *Bhagavad Gita* that lust, anger and greed are the three major obstacles in the path of a man who strives for spiritual expression. They are to be conquered. To root them out we need a strong desire combined with perseverence. Let us not forget that "Whatever we want to do we can do, and where there is a will there is a way."

For an adult the best disciplines are those he gives himself willingly. Also his ability to accept the natural disciplines that come on life's pathway in the form of frustrations, disappointments, opposition and obstacles prove whether he is strong in character, mature in emotion, or not. Not to feel injured when circumstances strike at us is the mark of mastery. When we can deny ourself, sacrifice personal desires without a sense of loss or deprivation, where self-denial and self-sacrifice are voluntary and joyful expressions of our personal life, then we have really become superior human beings. And a superior human being is the man expressing his divine perfection.

Vedanta proclaims that the evolution of man proceeds through struggle and error, trial and failure eventually to victory and achievement. In time, often through many lives, man reaches that height in stature which is the manifestation of his Divine Self. Some men may already have it, having brought along with them a high degree of self-development, but others, too, are destined to arrive at the same goal. This is the promise of the teaching of Vedanta: each man will some day become his real Self, the God, because man is primarily God and

he comes to earth again and again for this final realization. It is not through repression of desire, however, that he can progress spiritually, but rather by fulfillment, sublimation and outgrowth of desire.

Sri Krishna says in the Gita: "By not giving food to the senses one can deaden the sensations, but desire still lingers in the mind; all desires drop off when man has seen the Lord." Or as our illumined Master, Sri Ramakrishna tells us, "When the fruit is grown and ripe, the petals of the flower out of which it came fall off." Similarly, when man has matured and sublimated his desires, he has become his true Self. Then the old pattern of his being no longer exists.

Let us be encouraged by the knowledge that man is ever on the path of progress, advancing on and on, and that his own noble drives lead him to the mastery and conquest of his weakness and lower instincts. Moreover, he is always inspired and influenced by other men, the rare ones who, by their life and example testify that man is a transcendent Spirit.

A little consideration of what takes place around us every day would show us that a higher law than that of our will regulates events; that our painful labors are unnecessary and fruitless; that only in our easy, simple, spontaneous action are we strong, and by contenting ourselves with obedience we become divine. Belief and love—a believing love will relieve us of a vast load of care. O my brothers, God exists. There is a soul at the center of nature and over the will of every man, so that none of us can wrong the universe . . . The whole course of things goes to teach us faith. We need only obey. There is guidance for each of us, and by lowly listening we shall hear the right word. —*R. W. Emerson*

VEDANTA ON THE AIR

BROADCASTS

by Sister Daya and Olive Conway

(February 6, 1954)

OLIVE CONWAY: You have made the statement, Sister Daya, that "Truth is One, men call It by many names." Do you mean by this that the God of the Christians, the God of the Hindus, the God of the Mohammedans is the same God?

SISTER DAYA: Conceptions of God may differ; but the Ultimate Reality is One. It is as if men of many nationalities were to go down to a pool to fetch water. The Englishman calls it *water,* the Frenchman calls it *eau,* the German calls it *wasser,* the Italian calls it *aqua,* but that which they drink is the same liquid. So it is with Truth, God.

OLIVE CONWAY: This oneness of all things — it is so vast, like the sky. If one accepts it, what becomes of one's personal faith, one's own close, intimate approach to God?

SISTER DAYA: It becomes more personal, more intimate than ever.

OLIVE CONWAY: You mean as a Christian I can follow Christ and at the same time accept the great oneness of Vedanta?

SISTER DAYA: Of course; why not? Religion is that which makes us realize the Unchangeable One. Whichever path leads you most directly to That, is the path for you. But do not forget that the ways to God are as many as the breaths of men. Therefore never look down upon the faith of another. He is bound for the same goal as you.

OLIVE CONWAY: I see. The paths are many but the goal is one.

SISTER DAYA: Even the paths are closer than we think.

OLIVE CONWAY: Last Saturday you said you would tell us more about "the religion of experience." In what way is that related to our own religion?

SISTER DAYA: The only religion that is really ours is the religion we experience in our hearts. Christ said: *Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the Will of My Father.* Truth must be proved within one's own being; not taken on hearsay.

OLIVE CONWAY: But what about the spiritual truths given by the great Teachers, should we not accept those? For instance, the statement of Christ: *Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God* — what about that?

SISTER DAYA: Unless we ourselves become pure in heart, how can we know that that is true? We must prove its truth through our own life and experience. Only then will our faith be unshakeable. "Verification is the only proof of religious truth. Each must verify for himself, and no teacher who says: 'I have seen, but *you* cannot,' is to be trusted."

OLIVE CONWAY: I am so glad that India in bringing her wisdom to the West is not seeking to destroy our Christian faith.

SISTER DAYA: *Con*struction not *de*struction is the watchword of Vedanta. Its purpose is to enrich that which one already believes. Let me quote to you the words of a great Hindu teacher, Vivekananda, one of the first to bring India's spiritual message to the Western world. He said: "I do not come to convert you

to a new belief. I want to make the Methodist a better Methodist, the Presbyterian a better Presbyterian, the Unitarian a better Unitarian. I want to teach you to live the truth; to reveal the Light within your soul."

OLIVE CONWAY: In your Temple of the Universal Spirit at the Ananda Ashrama do you find among those who come to the Services, people of varying faiths?

SISTER DAYA: We have not a few who come to us and go to their own churches too. We have had Protestants, Roman Catholics, and many Jewish people — especially during the war. We were a haven then for refugees. People came who had suffered so terribly, and I cannot tell you how grateful they were for the Ashrama's universal spirit, for the friendliness and the peace!

OLIVE CONWAY: Do you have these different sects represented in your regular membership?

SISTER DAYA: It may surprise you to know that we have no regular members, no paid dues, no membership tickets. Those who come with love, and appreciation of the Ideal we serve are our members.

OLIVE CONWAY: In what way does your philosophy teach the Methodist to be a better Methodist and the Presbyterian to be a better Presbyterian? If it has no dogmas to present, what does it bring?

SISTER DAYA: Certain great, universal principles which contain and clarify all the great religious teachings.

OLIVE CONWAY: Such as?

SISTER DAYA: The words of Christ, for instance: *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* The great principle of oneness reveals that there is only One Self, the final Reality in us all. Therefore the Vedanta

philosophy would say: "Love thy neighbor as thyself, because actually he *is* thy Self."

OLIVE CONWAY: Would not absorption in an ultimate oneness mean annihilation for the individual?

SISTER DAYA: Let me answer you with some lines of the Persian poet, Omar Khayyam:

> "The more I die to self, I live the more
> The more abase myself, the higher soar;
> And strange! the more I drink of Being's wine,
> More sane I grow and sober than before."

OLIVE CONWAY: In other words, *He that loseth his life shall find it.*

SISTER DAYA: When we realize the One, we do not lose our life or our self; only our limitations.

OLIVE CONWAY: And we are all the time trying to lose those.

SISTER DAYA: Just as the thousands of leaves on a tree find their true life in the tree itself, so men find their true Being in the innermost Being from Whom they all come forth — the One Being. Love, brotherhood, religion, ethics — all are efforts to attain that oneness.

OLIVE CONWAY: But man never seems to attain it.

SISTER DAYA: We have great examples of those who have succeeded: Christ, Buddha, Laotze, Sri Ramakrishna — to mention only a few.

OLIVE CONWAY: What was the secret of their success?

SISTER DAYA: The secret of all spiritual attainment lies in *realization.* Christ cannot be found on the outside, nor can any of the Great Ones. One must go within and more within, to the very root of one's being in order to touch the heart of one's ideal. Do you know the poem:

"Though Christ a thousand times in
Bethlehem be born
If he's not born within your heart,
your soul is all forlorn?"

OLIVE CONWAY: These are beautiful theories.

SISTER DAYA: Religion must become more than a theory. You cannot inherit a religion. You must experience it within your own soul. Christ was not theorizing when He said: *I and My Father are one.*

OLIVE CONWAY: But that was Christ. What has it to do with us?

SISTER DAYA: Christ did not separate Himself from us: He said to His disciples: *I go unto My God and your God, unto My Father and your Father.*

OLIVE CONWAY: How does Vedanta look upon Christ?

SISTER DAYA: Vedanta does not dogmatize. Every man can have his own conception. But I think I can say that the great Eastern Wisdom regards Jesus the Christ as a supreme embodiment of the One Eternal Light.

OLIVE CONWAY: How does this differ from the ordinary Christian concept?

SISTER DAYA: In one sense, it does not differ; but it goes farther. It is inclusive, not exclusive. It feels with St. John that that One Eternal Light is the Light that lighteth *every man* that cometh into this world. In the Christ it shone out in full glory, as also in the other supreme Teachers — in man it is covered over by ignorance, but still it is there.

OLIVE CONWAY: Then you do not hold that man is born in sin and iniquity.

SISTER DAYA: We hold that man's true being is of God; but through ignorance of his own nature he has lost his way and has taken the unreal for the Real. He

thinks of himself as a body that was born and will die. He identifies himself with his c h a n g i n g thoughts and feelings. He says, "I am hot; I am cold; I am sick; I am well." But the Real Man, the Spirit within, the Immortal, was never born nor will it ever die.

OLIVE CONWAY: Then Vedanta gives man the hope of immortality?

SISTER DAYA: Man is more than immortal; he is eternal. Let me read you one of the loftiest statements that has ever been made concerning man's eternal nature, his true divine Self. It is from a great Hindu scripture, the *Bhagavad Gita,* in which Sri Krishna, a divine Incarnation declares: *As in this body the embodied soul passes through childhood, youth and old age, in the same manner it goes from one body to another; therefore the wise are never deluded regarding (the Soul). These bodies are perishable; but the dwellers in these bodies are eternal, indestructible and impenetrable. He who considers this Self as a slayer or who thinks that this Self is slain, neither of these knows the Truth. For It does not slay nor is It slain. This Self is never born, nor does It die, nor after once having been does It go into non-being. This Self is unborn, eternal, changeless, ancient. It is never destroyed, even when the body is destroyed. As man casts off worn-out garments and puts on others which are new, similarly the embodied soul, casting off worn-out bodies, enters into others which are new. Sword cannot pierce that Self, fire cannot burn It, water cannot wet It and air cannot dry It. It cannot be pierced nor burned, nor wet, nor dried. It is eternal, all pervading,*

unchangeable, immovable, everlasting. Therefore knowing this to be so though shouldst not grieve.

OLIVE CONWAY: Perhaps next Saturday, Sister Daya, you will tell us what the scripture means when it states that the embodied soul passes from one body to another.

SISTER DAYA: You refer to what is called reincarnation. Yes, next time we can talk about the divine pilgrim, man, and his sojourn in many mansions.

(February 13, 1954)

OLIVE CONWAY: Today, Sister Daya, you are going to talk to us of reincarnation. This time we shall really need your magic carpet if we are to take a trip into distant time and space, in order to follow man on his great pilgrimage.

SISTER DAYA: His pilgrimage through many mansions, back to the House of the Father from which originally he came forth.

OLIVE CONWAY: Why isn't death enough to carry him back to the house of the Father? Why does he have to be born again and again?

SISTER DAYA: We are told that death means only a change of form, not true liberation. When you lay aside your physical body you will find yourself in a world that will correspond to your consciousness. In India they feel that the thought one thinks at the time of death tends to determine one's after-death condition.

OLIVE CONWAY: That doesn't seem fair. Suppose one were struck and killed by an automobile just when one happened to be thinking of the latest movie or a new hat?

SISTER DAYA: Perhaps that is why the Divine Lord, Sri

Krishna, tells his disciple, in the *Bhagavad Gita,* one of India's great scriptures: *At all times think of Me and perform actions.* Actually, however, even in swift and sudden death, the mind will instantaneously turn to that thought which dominates the consciousness.

OLIVE CONWAY: You mean that the miser would at once think of his gold, the musician of his music, the devotee of his ideal?

SISTER DAYA: Something like that.

OLIVE CONWAY: And I suppose that after his death, the miser would just go on hoarding, the musician playing, the lover loving? So that really there would not be much of a change between life on earth and life after death.

SISTER DAYA: That is what we are given to understand. About the 12th century after Christ, there lived in India a poet and a mystic by the name of Kabir. He was also a rug weaver, and as he wove his rugs he sang of his own spiritual experiences. Here is what he says of death: *If your bonds be not broken whilst living, what hope of deliverance in death? It is but an empty dream that the soul shall have union with Him because it has passed from the body. If He is found now, He is found then. If not, we do but go to dwell in the City of Death. If you have union now, you shall have it hereafter.*

OLIVE CONWAY: Then it is in the earth life that we must find heaven or we'll never find it beyond. Is that why man has to come back to earth and put on bodies that are new? Could he not work out his destiny over there?

SISTER DAYA: We have to come back to reap where we

have sown. Man has to learn to become master on every plane of existence, and how many things there are to learn here on earth!

OLIVE CONWAY: This is very enlightening. There is so much in the orthodox idea of eternal reward and eternal punishment that offends one's reason and one's sense of justice. But this idea of gradually working out one's own salvation is extremely satisfying.

SISTER DAYA: It has satisfied the minds of millions of human beings throughout the centuries.

OLIVE CONWAY: More in the Orient than in the Occident, is that not true?

SISTER DAYA: That is true. Largely because somewhere back in its early years the Christian Church repudiated belief in reincarnation.

OLIVE CONWAY: Was it ever a part of Christianity?

SISTER DAYA: Some of the most famous of the early Church Fathers, such as Origen and Clemens Alexandrinus taught it.

OLIVE CONWAY: Why then was it abandoned?

SISTER DAYA: Because it placed man's destiny in man's own hands and gave him endless time to achieve it. Naturally it was not popular with a growing priesthood.

OLIVE CONWAY: Is there anything in Christ's own words that would indicate an acceptance of this idea?

SISTER DAYA: One can quote scripture to prove almost anything. Yet it does seem that there are statements which would indicate a general acceptance of this belief. Take, for example, the time when Christ suddenly asked His disciples: *Who do men say that I am?* What would the followers of some modern

Christian teacher think if he should turn to them and without preamble say: "Who do men say that I am?" They would be puzzled, would not know what he was talking about. But Christ's disciples showed no hesitation. At once they answered: "John the Baptist, but some say Elias; and others, one of the prophets." This shows that the subject of Christ's previous appearance on earth had been the subject of general discussion. Of John the Baptist, Christ Himself said: *If ye will receive it, this was Elias that was for to come.* At another time he was asked, "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents that he was *born* blind?"

OLIVE CONWAY: Why, that would mean that he sinned before he was born, which certainly would mean that he was not created at his birth.

SISTER DAYA: In that instance, Christ said that neither the man nor his parents had sinned. He did not rebuke his disciples for any false belief; he merely showed that that particular case fell into a different category.

OLIVE CONWAY: Nowadays people are apt to treat the idea of reincarnation as a joke.

SISTER DAYA: That is because the orthodox sought to defeat it by ridicule; but they have not succeeded.

OLIVE CONWAY: It has too great a fascination for men's minds.

SISTER DAYA: Those who feel defeated in this life like to think they were kings or queens in some former existence.

OLIVE CONWAY: (laughing) Isn't that true! You never hear someone say, "I think I was a servant in my last life." It always has to be Cleopatra or Caesar or the Queen of Sheba. Nothing less.

SISTER DAYA: The great philosopher, Hume, said that it was the only system of immortality a philosopher could look at.

OLIVE CONWAY: Did any other of our great thinkers of the West accept the idea?

SISTER DAYA: Many of the German philosophers as well as the Cambridge Platonists. I think most people know how deeply Emerson and Thoreau were influenced by the wisdom of India. There is no belief more widely spread or that goes back to more ancient times.

OLIVE CONWAY: One often comes across the idea in poetry.

SISTER DAYA: It is a natural for the poets. Through art the mind is freed from prejudice and gravitates without inhibitions toward what it feels to be truth.

OLIVE CONWAY: Wordsworth said:

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar . . ."

SISTER DAYA: Here is one, more modern. The present Poet Laureate, John Masefield, has written:

"I hold that when a person dies
His soul returns again to earth;
Arrayed in some new flesh disguise
Another mother gives him birth.
With sturdier limbs and brighter brain
The old soul takes the roads again.
Such is my own belief and trust;
This hand, this hand that holds the pen
Has many hundred times been dust
And turned, as dust, to dust again.
These eyes of mine have blinked and shone
In Thebes, in Troy, in Babylon . . ."

OLIVE CONWAY: That is direct enough. But do you know, Sister Daya, many people shy away from the

idea of rebirth because they think it means going back into animal forms.

SISTER DAYA: That is a perversion of the idea. Reincarnation means soul *evolution,* not a going backward. People do not fear to accept the Darwinian theory of evolution on the grounds that their children might be born in the form of monkeys.

OLIVE CONWAY: The trouble is, many people do not stop to think.

SISTER DAYA: It has been said that most of us do not have opinions; we have prejudices.

OLIVE CONWAY: If we all have endless lives behind us, why do we not remember?

SISTER DAYA: Some do; but really it is a blessed thing that most of us do not. It is hard enough to bear the burden of even one life. But the memory is not lost. It is stored in the depths of consciousness and manifests in our loves and hates, our tendencies — in short, in our character.

OLIVE CONWAY: You mean that our past experiences affect our character?

SISTER DAYA: We are gradually moulded by them, just as the body is built by the food that is eaten.

OLIVE CONWAY: Then our lives on earth are like days in school.

SISTER DAYA: Yes, we can think of it that way. We are drawn back into earth life by our desires, and to reap the harvest we have sown.

OLIVE CONWAY: But do we never graduate?

SISTER DAYA: Most surely. When the little ego loses itself in the Divine Self, then man becomes free of the prison house he has built by his thoughts and actions.

OLIVE CONWAY: Is that what it means to be saved?

SISTER DAYA: Vedanta does not speak of salvation, only of liberation. Masefield ends the poem I just quoted with these illuminating lines:

> "So shall I fight, so shall I tread
> In this long war beneath the stars.
> So shall a glory wreathe my head,
> So shall I faint and show the scars;
> Until this case, this clogging mould
> Be smithied all to kingly gold."

OLIVE CONWAY: One thing still puzzles me: You stated that the true Divine Self in man is never born nor does it ever die; yet you say that man is born into earth life over and over again.

SISTER DAYA: These paradoxes are always present in connection with things spiritual — like the words of Christ: *He that loseth his life shall find it.* The real, eternal Self, the pure Spirit, is never born nor does it die. Let me put it this way: The sun itself never comes to earth or touches the earth; but its rays not only flood the earth, but they are colored and affected by many things connected with the earth. They can be darkened or obscured by what they pass through. They can be broken and distorted; yet their golden source, the sun, is forever unaffected. So it is with the Great Self of man and Its reflection in the ego.

OLIVE CONWAY: One more question: You said that some people do remember their past lives. Do you know of any instance?

SISTER DAYA: Next Saturday I shall tell you of one case of this sort that may interest you; although I think the argument for reincarnation rests on its inherent reasonableness and its philosophic soundness, rather

than on any personal memory which may provide evidence, but is not proof. Its appeal is to the sense of justice in men's hearts, especially when we take it in conjunction with the great law of ethical cause and effect, the law of *Karma,* which decrees that "Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap."

OLIVE CONWAY: Will you also tell us of that next Saturday, Sister Daya? I am sure many will be eager to hear of anything that helps to explain the apparent, great injustices of life.

SISTER DAYA: It is a tremendous subject; but I shall do my best.

OLIVE CONWAY: Thank you, Sister Daya.

SANCTUARY

by Beatrice Bingham

Close the door!
Shut out the rush of thoughts,
That in bewildering numbers crowd the mind,
Playing upon the heart,
As wanton winds upon Eolian harps,
Awaking notes unsought.
Close the door.

Light the fire!
The altar is o'erlaid
And only lacks the sacrificial flame;
Incense awaits this touch.
Then from the spark of God,
Caught in the meshes of man's soul,
Light the fire.

MEDITATION

by Hari Prasad Shastri

Meditation is the secret of real life. He who does not know how to meditate is hardly on a spiritual level. He can hardly become a good friend, a good relative, or a good neighbor. While a prisoner is behind bars he is neither reliable nor useful either to himself or to others. Meditation is the way to get out of the limited human personality and when you have done so you can know Truth, you can know how to love and to be a friend and to be a disciple.

Meditation involves three great factors:

1. Relaxation.
2. Concentration.
3. Merging the mind in Truth.

Relaxation is the law of life. It means to make the nerves free from tension, the mind free from will and the will free from voluntary action. The highest things in life are achieved by effortless effort, by self-forgetfulness. Inter alia, those who come to see me, if they come in this mood, they will get some real benefit which flows through me from the personality of Shri Dada.

Relaxation can be obtained by deep breathing taken consciously; retaining each breath at least twice as long as it takes to take it in fully. Concentration is fixing the mind on anything great and good as a symbol of Reality. Meditation means absorbing the mind in the Spirit.

The mind is a modification of *avidya. Avidya* is a phase of pseudo-manifestation of the spirit. Meditation means to absorb the mind first in its cause, *avidya,* and then in the substratum of *avidya,* the great *Atman.*

The object of meditation is to create the *vritti,* "I am

Shiva" and to suppress all other *vrittis*. When this state is matured, it is called *Samadhi*. Meditation is not, "I am nothing," or "I know nothing." In Yoga, this *vritti* is reduced to nonentity. Yoga is not sleep or hypnosis.

The steps in the science and art of Yoga are:

a) Expelling all desires and thoughts by dwelling on whatever comes before the mind with the conviction: "This is nothing; it is empty; it is useless; it is pain-giving."

b) Negation of all self-consciousness. Yoga must be an effortless effort, as is the real study and real love. A lover who knows, "I am loving," has no idea of what real love is. "I am" is absorbed in "Thou art" and "Thou art" is negated in "All is *Brahman.*"

c) Being completely at one and identified with the text of the meditation.

d) To think without being a thinker is to meditate constantly. To act without the consciousness of being an actor is the right way of acting. As long as the thorns of desires, of gains and profits bristle in the field of the heart, life is not only useless but dangerous. Think without being a thinker. Be a friend without being enslaved and attached.

e) Live thy life like a painter who paints his ideas on the empty canvas of life as a universal being.

f) Cease to do anything exclusively for thyself. Friendship, love, sleep, eating, study and so forth, are meant for the service of *Guru* and *Govinda* and not at all for one's own self. If you pay attention to the preservation of your own self, you waste it and you create nothing thereby.

g) Practise the greatest economy of expression in words and also in expenditure of energy.

h) Let your meditation be effortless and in complete relaxation.

i) He who comes to the Master in a complete self-giving, will convert his self into the divine Self and will understand better than the one who comes with some self-interest.

j) In life, the effortless effort is the best effort. The mind will put up resistance against tranquility, concentration and meditation. Do not give way to it. Be like water, that is, completely relaxed, soft and cool, and thus be a force mightier than the hardest granite rocks. Remove mental tension by breathing deeply and rhythmically a few minutes before the meditation.

Say to the cosmic force, Truth, *Brahman*: "I am Thine; Thou art, I am not; Thou, Thou; *Om, Om, Om.*" As long as one has the least sense of "This is mine," he is on the verge of a deep precipice. Such a Napoleon is doomed to a miserable St. Helena.

You want to conquer evil? Then surrender your mind to the Holy Name, to *Guru* and *Govinda*. Do not wrestle with the mind, do not quarrel with it, because by doing so you strengthen its resistance. Surrender it; get rid of it. This can only be done by rubbing out your egoity and desires. Do not be afraid. In the beginning you will seem to get nothing, but remember, this nothing is everything.

Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise from outward
things, whate'er you may believe.
There is an inmost center in us all,
Where Truth abides in fullness. —*Robert Browning*

MORE HASIDIC TALES

(An account of the life and teachings of the Baal Shem, together with a number of Hasidic tales, appeared in the Summer and Fall 1954 issues of *Message of the East.* The present selection is offered as a sequel. The main source for these stories is Martin Buber's *Tales of the Hasidim.*)

Rabbi Hanokh told this story:

"There was once a man who was very stupid. When he got up in the morning it was so hard for him to find his clothes that at night he almost hesitated to go to bed for thinking of the trouble he would have on waking. One evening he finally made a great effort, took paper and pencil and as he undressed noted down exactly where he put everything he had on. The next morning, very well pleased with himself, he took the slip of paper in his hand and read: 'cap' — there it was; he set it on his head; 'pants' — there they lay; he got into them; and so it went until he was fully dressed. 'That's all very well, but now where am I myself?' he asked in great consternation. 'Where in the world am I?' He looked and looked, but it was a vain search; he could not find himself.

"And that is how it is with us," said the rabbi.

* * * * *

A disciple asked the Baal Shem: "Why is it that one who clings to God and knows he is close to Him, sometimes experiences a sense of interruption and remoteness?"

The Baal Shem explained: "When a father sets out to teach his little son to walk, he stands in front of him and holds his two hands on either side of the child, so that he cannot fall, and the boy goes toward his father between his father's hands. But the moment he draws close the father moves away a little and holds his hands

farther apart, and he does this over and over, so that the child may learn to walk."

* * * * *

Once, when Rabbi Pinhas entered the House of Study, he saw that his disciples who had been talking busily stopped and started at his coming. He asked them: "What were you talking about?"

"Rabbi," they said, "we were saying how afraid we are that the Evil Urge will pursue us."

"Don't worry," he replied. "You have not got high enough for it to pursue you. For the time being, you are still pursuing it."

* * * * *

Rabbi Moshe Leib told this story:

"How to love men is something I learned from a peasant. He was sitting in an inn along with other peasants, drinking. For a long time he was as silent as all the rest, but when he was moved by the wine, he asked one of the men seated beside him: 'Tell me, do you love me or don't you love me?' The other replied: 'I love you very much.' But the first peasant replied: 'You say that you love me, but you do not know what I need. If you really loved me, you would know.' The other had not a word to say to this, and the peasant who had put the question fell silent again.

"But I understand. To know the needs of men and to bear the burden of their sorrow — that is the true love of men."

* * * * *

Rabbi Moshe Hayyim Efraim, the Baal Shem's grandson told:

"I heard this from my grandfather: 'Once a fiddler played so sweetly that all who heard him began to dance,

and whoever came near enough to hear, joined in the dance. Then a deaf man who knew nothing of music, happened along, and to him all he saw seemed the action of madmen — senseless and in bad taste'."

* * * * *

It is told:

"Once, on the evening after the Day of Atonement, the moon was hidden behind the clouds and the Baal Shem could not go out to say the Blessing of the New Moon. This weighed heavily on his spirit, for now, as often before, he felt that destiny too great to be gauged depended on the work of his lips. In vain he concentrated his intrinsic power on the light of the wandering star to help it throw off the heavy sheath. Whenever he sent someone out he was told that the clouds had grown even more lowering. Finally he gave up hope.

"In the meantime, the hasidim who knew nothing of the Baal Shem's grief, had gathered in the front room of the house and begun to dance, for on this evening that was their way of celebrating with festal joy the atonement for the year brought about by the zaddik's priestly service. When their holy delight mounted higher and higher, they invaded the Baal Shem's chamber, still dancing. Overwhelmed by their own frenzy of happiness they took him by the hands as he sat there sunk in gloom, and drew him into the round. At this moment someone called outside. The night had suddenly grown light; in greater radiance than ever before, the moon curved on a flawless sky."

* * * * *

When the Baal Shem had a difficult task before him, he would go to a certain place in the woods, light a fire and meditate in prayer — and what he had set out to

perform was done. When a generation later the "Maggid of Meserich" was faced with the same task he would go to the same place in the woods and say: " We can no longer light the fire, but we can still speak the prayers" — and what he wanted done became reality. Again a generation later Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov had to perform this task. And he too went into the woods and said: "We can no longer light a fire, nor do we know the secret meditations belonging to the prayer, but we do know the place in the woods to which it all belongs— and that must be sufficient;" and sufficient it was. But when another generation had passed and Rabbi Israel of Rishin was called upon to perform the task, he sat down on his golden chair in his castle and said: "We cannot light the fire, we cannot speak the prayers, we do not know the place, but we can tell the story of how it was done." And the story which he told had the same effect as the actions of the other three.

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Rabbi Bunam was asked: "What is meant by the expression 'sacrificing to idols?' It is unthinkable that a man should really bring a sacrifice to idols!"

He said: "I shall give you an example. When a devout and righteous man sits at table with others and would like to eat a little more but refrains because of what the people might think of him — that is sacrificing to idols."

* * * * *

Once Rabbi Hayyim of Krosno, a disciple of the Baal Shem, was watching a rope dancer together with his disciples. He was so absorbed in the spectacle that they asked him what it was that riveted his gaze to this foolish performance. "This man," he said, "is risking his life,

and I cannot say why. But I am quite sure that while he is walking the rope, he is not thinking of the fact that he is earning a hundred gulden by what he is doing, for if he did he would fall."

* * * * *

Said Rabbi Zusya: "In the world to come they will not ask me, 'Why were you not Moses?' They will ask, 'Why were you not Zusya?' "

* * * * *

A rich man once came to the maggid of Koznich.

"What are you in the habit of eating?" the maggid asked. "I am very modest in my demands," the rich man replied. "Bread and salt and a drink of water are all I need."

"What are you thinking of!" the rabbi reproved him. "You must eat roast meat and drink mead like all rich people." And he did not let the man go until he had promised to do as he said. Later the hasidim asked him the reason for this odd request.

"Not until he eats meat," said the maggid, "will he realize that the poor man needs bread. As long as he himself eats bread, he will think that the poor man can live on stones."

* * * * *

The Rabbi of Zans used to tell this story of himself:

"In my youth when I was fired with the love of God, I thought I would convert the whole world to God. But soon I discovered that it would be quite enough to convert the people who lived in my town, and I tried for a long time but did not succeed. Then I realized that my program was still much too ambitious, and I concentrated on the persons in my own household. But I could not convert them either. Finally it dawned on me: I must

work upon myself so that I may give true service to God. But I did not accomplish even this."

* * * * *

Rabbi Aaron put it: "This world is the lowest, and yet the loftiest of all."

* * * * *

One midnight when Rabbi Moshe Leib was absorbed in the mystic teachings, he heard a knock at his window. A drunken peasant stood outside and asked to be let in and given a bed for the night. For a moment the zaddik's heart was full of anger and he said to himself: "How can a drunk have the insolence to ask to be let in, and what business has he in this house!" But then he said silently in his heart: "And what business has he in God's world, but if God gets along with him, can I reject him?" He opened the door at once and prepared a bed.

FROM A DISCIPLE'S NOTEBOOK

(Continued from the Fall Issue)

The disciple, searching her mind for the secret of that beauty which permeated Swami Paramananda's every utterance, is aware of a synthesis, of a wonderful combination of voice, thought, feeling and expression which brought to those who heard him a sense of wholeness, of completion on all planes of being. An English actor, speaking of the Swami's poetry, once said, "It has a Shakespearian flavor." The disciple knew what he meant, for the Swami's words flowed with a simplicity and a natural rhythm native to trees, flowers, rivers, in truth to all of nature's lovely unself-conscious movements. They came forth from the deep, limpid source of pure Spirit and drew the mind to their own exalted height.

At Queensberry Street and later at the California Ashrama when the Swami cooked for some special celebration, and people asked what he had put into the different dishes, Sister Satya Prana who was apt to be standing by would reply: "Well, there are the regular ingredients plus something the Swami shakes off from the tips of his fingers." This was not just a poetic statement; it was literally true according to Hindu tradition which holds that what a person *is,* the thoughts that he holds, and the feelings that possess him, all go into the food which he prepares. So with the Swami's words, whether of poetry or of prose. What he was, his whole inner and outer being, went into them and vibrated in the tones of his voice which at the Summer School blended perfectly with the murmurous voice of Mother Nature. No setting seemed so appropriate as the Cloister terrace. And even today as the disciple, sitting out under the same trees, reads what was said so long ago, that golden voice echoes once more in her ears and in her consciousness.

"All the fetters of the heart are broken, all doubts are dissolved, and all the bondage of *Karma* is burnt up when That dawns in our hearts, when that Highest, Holiest reigns over us and actuates all our activities. That is the supreme attainment." Thus she hears him speak to the assembled group on the far-away morning of August 13, 1926. The calm, the sparkle, the ineffable freshness of those early hours give to all who are there a feeling of new birth. Suddenly divine illumination seems close and easily attainable.

The Swami opens his book of *Daily Thoughts and Prayers* and reads the salient thought for the day:

Never destroy your own happiness through impatience or thoughtlessness.

Swami: Impatience often does destroy our happiness and our thoughtless deeds also destroy it.

(Swami reads lesson)

The same thing can produce both happiness and unhappiness. We can make ourselves so uncontrolled, so unworthy of the blessings that surround us that we are not able to take good opportunities when they come. We gain cheerfulness when we live close to the heart of Truth, because Truth is a light, a glowing spiritual light; and when that light shines, there can be no darkness. Heaven is not a vague, visionary thing. It is something we create within ourselves. We make it out of the exuberance and radiance of our soul.

Swami: How very true that is! We experience this when we are in tune with ourselves and with all our surroundings. We enjoy a veritable heaven, full of radiance, full of joy and peace. Then through our attitude we can destroy any little cloud of envy or anger that may arise. Otherwise that one small cloud will draw another cloud and another, obscuring our inner light and causing the soul to go through agonies of doubt and despair.

We can make our inner life very fragrant, so much so that that fragrance penetrates the density of the flesh, and others perceive it. There are some who carry with them the fragrance of a flower. When they enter a room it is just as if a light had burst forth. They carry that light within them.

Impatience always comes to those who are shallow, who live on the surface. The lowly, the meek, the humble, no one can quarrel with them. The lowly people follow the path of non-resistance, the path of spiritual principle.

Endurance! Have endurance like a tree. It withstands the weather. It even withstands the blow. It shelters him who would cut it down.

Meditation is a big word. Often it discourages people, but it is just a step beyond the thoughtful, concentrated mind. It means bringing our mind to a state of equilibrium.

(Swami reads poem)

Now I sing only one song,
The song that Thou has taught me.
It never grows old to my ear.

Swami: We are taught many things, but one thing sometimes seems to take possession of our whole life, to express our Ideal, and if we can just concentrate on that, carry that constantly in our consciousness, it becomes like a ray of light in the midst of darkness, a guiding star!

The essential thing is to learn to love. As soon as love dawns in our heart, concentration follows. We cannot concentrate our mind on the infinite sky, but if there is a star to mark the depths of space with a concrete form, we can focus upon it. Same way it is in spiritual life. God is omnipotent, all-abiding, but there must be a point of contact by means of which we can see Him manifested. It becomes simpler to love the Ideal when it is definite rather than purely abstract. We approach the infinite through some finite avenue that in our thoughts and feelings is absolutely related to that infinitude; and that is the idea of worship, that is the idea of prayer.

(Swami reads prayer)

O Thou all-abiding Spirit, make Thy
care and guidance a reality to me.
May the consciousness of Thy Presence
become so vivid
That I may find all my rest and strength
in Thee alone.
May I walk by Thy light only and never
turn away to follow darkness.

Swami: Never destroy your own happiness through impatience or thoughtlessness. To turn away from the light, that is thoughtlessness. And when do we turn away from the light? When we take ordinary aid and forsake divine aid; when we lay chief importance on the glamour of the material world. "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

If the inner life remains in darkness, all the light we have through artificial means is of no avail. If the inner life is empty, all the outer possessions are as nothing.

Exuberance, light, peace, harmony — these are born of spiritual communion. When we live close to Perfect Being we feel no imperfection, no lack. Think of Him as ever beneficent, Giver of all good, Embodiment of all blessedness — calm, serene, unafflicted by the sorrows of the world — One only, without a second! When we are able to bring ourselves in contact with that Light, that eternal Lighthouse, all darkness is dispelled, all ailments and imperfections cease to be. When we learn to meditate on that Effulgent One, the undying, the ever-living, then truly we are made whole: our body is revived, our mind is quickened. Meditate on That, the ever-radiant, the ever-perfect, untouched by sin or sorrow! *Om, Hari Om!*

NOON

(Swami reads from the *Dhammapada*)

All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage.

All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him like a shadow that never leaves him.

Swami: Thoughts, however small they may seem, are potent both for good and for evil. They are little seeds, and according to the seeds we sow, so shall we reap.

(Swami repeats reading)

We create certain conditions through our thoughts and those conditions we have to accept. Often we create them quite unconsciously, through brooding, for instance. There are certain habits we have formed from our childhood, physical habits and mental habits. Actually it is our thoughts that produce our physical habits. When we try to form some new habit, we find it most difficult, for our tendency is to forget the new and fall back on the old. If, however, we persist in the new way, the old set of habits will give way to the new. Meditation is the only sure means to overcome these established tendencies. Conscious meditation on light, purity, or holiness will overcome all of them.

If we think with any evil intent, pain is sure to follow, the scripture tells us. Often people hold certain things in their mind without giving them outer expression, yet they bear fruit.

Do not for a moment imagine that when someone commits an unwise act that it is an accident. Constant brooding produces these so-called accidents. It is just like storing up a high explosive. The wise man strives to discard such brooding thoughts when they are in their infancy. He does not allow them to accumulate. The ills we think are inevitable are due to thoughts we have

stored up from the past. But we can control this habit of brooding. Even when we have to accept the consequences of wrong thought in the form of pain, know that they are not of everlasting duration. Pain comes and goes, and through it we gain a lesson: we learn to rise above pleasure and pain, good and evil.

(Swami reads again from the *Dhammapada*)

"He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me" — in those who harbor such thoughts, hatred will never cease.

"He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me" — in those who do not harbor such thoughts hatred will cease.

Swami: Ego, vanity, pride, ignorance — as long as a man dwells on these thoughts of self-limitation, evil will never leave him; hatred will never leave him.

(Swami continues reading)

For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time: hatred ceases by love — this is an old rule.

Swami: The mind has the power to think noble thoughts, aspire to high ideals. The heart has the power to love and to cause one to work with love which is healing, restoring, up-building for oneself and for others. When we hear someone say: "I cannot love; my mind is full of bitterness," it is because of that bitterness and that hatred which he has allowed to take possession of his thoughts. The only way this can be overcome is by practicing the opposite feelings. We create heavenly joy within through the exuberance of the soul — its radiance; and the mind is the medium for conveying this.

When the mind is earth-bound, the individual soul cannot ascend. When mind, through right direction, regains its original power and vitality, all things are re-

vealed to it. It becomes like a focused light. One who has an illumined mind can read the book of life and give light to others for the solution of their problems. One type of thought draws us to darkness, and another type draws us to light. We must cling to the light because it always keeps our life pure and free. Meditate on light, think on light; let all your actions revolve in the realm of light.

O Thou effulgent Being, lead us
from the unreal to the Real!
Lead us from that which is fleeting
to that which is abiding!
Lead us from darkness to Light!
Lead us from the world of disease,
death and affliction to that
abode where there is immortality,
unbroken harmony and peace.

May this prayer be established in our consciousness that in every moment we may turn to that effulgent Being.

(4 P.M.)

(Swami reads from the *Bhagavad Gita*)

O Prince of the Bharata race, O Arjuna, four kinds of virtuous men worship Me (the Supreme Lord): the distressed, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of material prosperity and the wise.

Swami: When people are terribly molested by circumstances, that is one time they think of God. Even those who are not naturally religious, under the pressure of circumstances, seek a way of escape through prayer and devotion. They constitute one kind of worshipper. Another kind has real yearning for knowledge. And then there are the seekers of material prosperity and the wise.

(Swami continues reading)

Among them the wise, ever steadfast, devoted to the One (to Me), excels; for I am supremely dear to the wise and he is dear to Me.

Swami: Why does the wise man excel? Because his devotion is not a matter of bartering and bargaining, but rather Love for Love's sake; Truth for Truth's sake. This is what impels him.

The great King Yudisthara was once rebuked by his queen. "You have done so much for the Lord," she said, "but what has He done for you? You have known misfortune after misfortune, yet you keep on worshipping Him." Quickly the king looked up at the great mountains and said: "The mountains are so beautiful. I love them because of their beauty, and in the same way I love God, because there is nothing in all the world so lovable as the Lord!"

The man who is distressed prays and when he is really desperate his prayers are intense and one-pointed, but when the pressure is removed, he forgets.

One should not follow the path of Truth because of what people may think or say. One must follow it because of inner yearning.

(Swami continues reading)

Noble are all these, but I regard the wise as my very Self; for with soul ever steadfast, he is established in Me alone as his supreme goal.

Swami: Of course all these men are noble! But not every one who is in distress seeks God's aid. Many are inclined to curse. This was apparent in the attitude of one of the robbers at Christ's crucifixion. Often, even at the time of death a hateful soul may exhibit hate; an envious soul may exhibit envy; a morose soul may show

(Swami rereads line)

But I regard the wise as my very Self.

Swami: "The Knower of *Brahman* becomes like unto *Brahman.*" That is, knowledge means destroying all separateness. There is a great deal of difference between a blade of grass and this tree, a little cat and an elephant, between a boy and a man, but when you rise to a high pinnacle they all blend and become one. Thus when our higher vision unfolds we see oneness in and through everything.

(Swami continues reading)

At the end of many births the man of wisdom comes unto Me, seeing that all this is (pervaded by) one Self. Such a great-souled one is very difficult to find.

Swami: He is everywhere. He is in everything. He is in oneself. Whoever has that realization becomes one with the One. Such a soul is very rare. For instance, when you realize that God abides in you, you have to pay homage to everybody. Your love is no longer a theory. Sri Ramakrishna had this living consciousness. Not only did he see this divine consciousness in saints; he saw it in all human beings, even in sinners — even in a little leaf that somebody picked.

Great souls have feeling for all living things, not just by means of self-comparison but because they actually realize the ever-living Principle in all. Thus they are blissful, for realization of oneness means bliss. When one person through his small instrumentality can feel the bliss dwelling in other hearts and in the heart of the universe, how much more will be felt when all personal limitations are taken away. True knowledge means bliss. What is vast and unbounded, that alone can give fulfilment, can reveal the boundless form.

Such realization does not mean disregarding the little. According to the monistic idea, God is limitless, boundless, diseaseless. Someone taking up this idea and not understanding its true nature, might become unfeeling. He who has true knowledge, however, never can be unloving or indifferent to the needs of any living thing, no matter how small or humble. Here is where knowledge and devotion blend.

When we have that background of allness, it gives us great courage, great power to do things. Therefore in all our prayers and aspirations, in our waking hours, we should try to carry this great Immensity with us, the consciousness that all is permeated and pervaded by one innermost, boundless Self — One, only One.

REPORT

VEDANTA CENTRE — ANANDA ASHRAMA
COHASSET AND BOSTON, MASS.

For the past three months Vedanta Centre has carried on its activities in the face of challenging difficulties. The severe hurricane of August 31st damaged Ananda Ashrama considerably. It was an awesome experience to witness giant pines and maples, a hundred or more, broken, uprooted, splintered and snapped off by the one hundred miles an hour gale, as if they were no more than match sticks. Fortunately none of the houses was touched, and the loss was entirely in trees.

The following Sunday the Services were held as usual in the "Nature's Sanctuary" notwithstanding the devastation all around. This out-of-door shrine always resembling an arched cathedral has been somewhat altered in appearance. The tree under which Swami Paramananda

had sat conducting many Services still stands high and erect, and others too are there. Srimati Gayatri Devi spoke on *Blessing in Adversity* and on *Beautiful and the Terrible,* reminding the resident community and her congregation of the importance of practicing detachment and equanimity. Despite the total absence of electricity on which the Ashrama depends for cooking, drawing water from the well, heating and illumination, the Sunday dinner was served to a good-sized group. The second hurricane occurring on Saturday, September the 11th was less violent in Cohasset. It blew down more trees but did not affect the life of the Ashrama to any great extent.

DEDICATION OF CHAPEL IN BOSTON

Thursday, September 16th marked the dedication of Vedanta Centre's chapel and library in a new location. It is in an attractive house situated on Boston's Commonwealth Avenue near subway transportation. On a night with drenching and steady rain, a candlelight Service was held before the Centre's faithful friends who formed a goodly number. Great enthusiasm and joy were expressed by all because the present sanctuary resembles the old Vedanta Centre in beauty and atmosphere.

The joy of the festival observing *Durga Puja* or the Worship of Divine Mother was shadowed by the sudden passing of Hilda Johannigman, a veteran member of the Centre's consecrated community. This faithful soul had served Vedanta for a period of thirty-four years, and was known for her generosity, loyalty and dependability in service. Srimati Gayatri Devi conducted Hilda's service in the presence of her many friends and two members of her family, on the morning of Monday, October the 4th, the first day of the Mother's feast, which continued with special worship, songs and prayers for four days,

culminating in the celebration of *Vijaya* or victory on Thursday, October the 7th. The final Service was held in the city at the Vedanta Chapel. Many attended it and remained to partake of the refreshments afterwards.

The Festival of Lights was an occasion of brightness and gaiety. An overflow audience was represented at the Service during which Gayatri Devi explained the Hindu worship of Kali, the Dark Mother, with the ritual of many lights. Mr. Einar Hansen of Boston Symphony played on his violin "Ave Maria" and Schubert's "Serenade."

Sunday Services of October 31st terminated the morning worship for the public in Cohasset for the season. A Vesper Service was introduced at five o'clock in November, and was held on two successive Sundays, the 7th and the 14th.

On an unexpected call from Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, Gayatri Devi made a flying trip to California on Friday, November the 19th, leaving Boston in the morning and arriving the same evening. The purpose of her visit is to relieve Sister Daya of all Services and Classes until the first of the next year.

OUTSIDE LECTURES IN MASSACHUSETTS

On September 28th, Gayatri Devi spoke in Westwood at the First Parish United Church. She was the guest of the Women's Alliance and her subject was *East meets West*. The All Soul's Church of Braintree held an Interfaith Forum on Sunday evening, October the 31st. Gayatri Devi's topic was *Why I am a Hindu*. The third lecture was given on October 28th, before the Study group of the Unitarian Church of Weston on the chosen subject *What is Vedanta?* Again on Monday, November the 8th, Gayatri Devi was the luncheon guest of the Women's

Alliance of the First Unitarian Church in Boston. There she spoke on *India's Contribution to World Peace.* All these invitations are the result of Gayatri Devi's visit to Star Island last summer when her presence and message aroused genuine enthusiasm for Vedanta and for India in general.

During Gayatri Devi's absence in California, Dr. Amiya Chakravarty conducted the morning Services at the Vedanta Chapel on two successive Sundays. His subjects were *Message of Hinduism* and *Attachment and Detachment.*

The Thanksgiving Service was conducted by one of the consecrated members of the community in spirit of devotion and humility. In spite of inclement weather a large number of grateful friends joined in it.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA

SWAMI RAM DAS VISITS ANANDA ASHRAMA, NOVEMBER 9, 1954

The Ashrama was blessed by a surprise visit from one of India's great holy men, Swami Ram Das of the Anandashram, Kanhangad, South India. This most auspicious visit came about through a telephone conversation which the Swami had with Gayatri Devi while he was on the East coast. Unfortunately he was unable to go to Cohasset, but he promised Gayatri Devi that he would visit the Ananda Ashrama in California. Hurried preparations were made to receive the Swami with all the reverence and welcome which the Ashrama residents felt in their hearts and which they knew Swami Paramananda would have extended to him.

Swami Ram Das arrived about three o'clock in the afternoon, having been driven out by an American de-

votee, and brought with him members from his Ashram in India. It is difficult to put into prosaic words the atmosphere of childlike simplicity, wisdom and purity which emanated from this illumined soul. There was the rhythmic spontaneity which always seems to accompany spiritual realization. Accompanying him was one whom he introduced as the Mother of his Ashram, Krishnabhai. There was also his secretary, Swami Sat-Chit-Ananda and a Mr. Gupta. The Swami immediately seemed to feel at home at the Ashrama which carries the same name as his Ashram in India.

After visiting the Temple and paying reverence to the Shrine, the entire party gathered around the fire in the Cloister living room where light refreshments were served. The Swami re-embodied to the Ashrama members to an extraordinary extent the simple, spontaneous spirit of Swami Paramananda to whom he referred in most loving and appreciative terms.

Contacts such as this cannot be described. They have to do with the inner life and the refreshment of the spirit. The members of the Ashrama, one and all, felt sanctified by the experience. A few of them later in the week were able to hear the Swami speak at the Universalist Church under the auspices of Dr. Judith Tyberg and also at her East-West Cultural Center in Los Angeles on Saturday afternoon just prior to his departure for Honolulu. Those present at these meetings were impressed by Swamiji's wonderful combination of utter surrender and devotion plus a mind capable of grasping every situation and dealing with every problem.

There will abide at Ananda Ashrama the benediction of this holy man and of the beautiful and serene Mother, Krishnabhai.

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

Fall is a lovely time everywhere, and October brought bright, warm days to California, helping to create a beautiful atmosphere for the *Durga Puja,* the annual Festival of the Divine Mother. This feast began this year on the 4th of October. The private worship extended through the 7th which was *Vijaya,* when the Infinite Mother is said to leave Her Holy Peace with Her children. The public observance of the Mother Festival was held on Sunday, October 10th, when Sister Daya spoke to a large and receptive congregation on *Mother, Not Maker.* In the afternoon, after a happy luncheon was shared by many, a smaller group gathered to hear the Sister's inspiring words on the subject of "surrender."

Another of India's great Mother Festivals is the beautiful *Kali Puja,* or *Deepali,* the Festival of Lights. This most uplifting Service came on Tuesday night, the 26th of October. The Temple of the Universal Spirit was brilliantly lighted with many candles and vigil lights, and white and golden flowers adorned the Mother's Altar carrying out the idea of the over-coming of darkness by the light of the Spirit. Sister Daya's talk on the *Mystery of Light* was given to a Temple crowded with appreciative listeners.

Two weeks later, on the night of Wednesday, November 10th, in spite of the first rain of the season, many happy hearts joined together to make Ashrama's annual Christmas Bazaar a real success. The Library was filled with eager "shoppers" and everyone enjoyed cider and doughnuts served in the study during the evening. After purchases were made and refreshments consumed, all gathered together in the Library for music.

Thanksgiving was observed in the traditional manner, with a public Service conducted by Srimati Gayatri Devi.

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